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Discussion

The following notes by Mr.
Badley (Headmaster of Bedales)
form part of a considerable
discussion on the subject
of the P.N.S.U. Manifesto.

They were read on Wednesday
evening by Mr. Franklin
with Miss Mason's answers

The following notes form ^{by Mr. Doolittle, (Madame's Medals)} ~~part of~~ ^{considerable} correspondence on the subject of the P.M.U. Manifesto 1

1022 cmc 301

Section 1. I wish that some fuller definition had been added of what is meant by knowledge, as used by Miss Mason throughout the pamphlet, - the more as, for "the man in the street," it usually means information: and though in Section 10 it is expressly pointed out that "information is not education," anyone who had read so far under the impression that knowledge meant information, would have got an entirely wrong impression of the writer's meaning. I could wish, therefore, that at the outset it had been clearly stated that ^{by} knowledge ^{is} meant something very different from information.

In Section 4 it is said that the getting of knowledge, and the getting of delight in it are the ends of a child's education." This partly does what I mean, by including in knowledge the element of delight in it. But even that is hardly large enough. We do not know anything until we have made it completely our own, and can use it. Real knowledge implies power, and the definition of it should therefore include both pleasure in its attainment and pleasure in its use. It is, of course, in the sense of information that, as Miss Mason says in Section 4, "educational theorists systematically depreciate knowledge," - and rightly. But if we once admit that there can be no real knowledge without use and without delight, then all that she says holds good. But in that case, the statement in Section 1, that "the principle which keeps our great Public Schools perennially alive is that they

Xlive upon books," comes as a shock to those who are accustomed to see in this precisely their weak point, for the reason that the knowledge aimed at in the Public School by the use of books is too often mere information, with little use made of it, and less delight in it. It is true that "the best Public School boy is a fine product":- he has had the capacity to get something in the end out of the books he has used, and as they are amongst the finest books in the world, he could hardly fail to get something good from them. But it has been in spite of, and not because of, the hideous waste of energy in his earlier training; and at best, he has less power, and a narrower outlook, than would have been the case not only if he had been trained by other means than books alone, but if the books themselves had been rightly used in the earlier stages. Of course I know that with all this Miss Mason is really in agreement. But I think the wording of the first Section is unfortunate, as it might easily convey an entirely opposite impression. The real remedy is the one she suggests, that, as preparation even for the proper use of books at the Public School, there is need of a wide curriculum, including both things and books, (and, - as I should say, - things even more than books), up to the age of 14, as she says (or of 15, as I would rather say,) when a narrower and more concentrated course of study may well begin. In fact, I think that the whole subject would be made clearer if one began by insisting on the need of two stages of School training:- one, the wide

general course up to about fifteen; and after this age a more specialised course, in which the requirements of the later career ought to be considered. For example, all that she says in Section 16 is perfectly true, if we are thinking only of the earlier stage; but by no means true of the later. And though she has throughout confined her attention to the earlier stage, it would be well, I think, to make the point clear at the outset, or a careless reader might suppose that ^{she meant that} there was to be no place in education for the requirements of the ^{special} training for the calling in life, and so dismiss it all as "unpractical."

X It is ^{certainly} most necessary to protest, as she does in Section 3, against early specialisation, and selecting some subjects to the exclusion of others, instead of ^{first} letting a boy's interests have free play, and ^{so discovering} ~~then later follow~~ the lines of natural aptitude ^{to follow later.}

~~co-ordinated with both, - playing a large part in Nature study on the one hand, and in history on the other. But co-ordination, as she says, can be made quite ridiculous and meaningless.~~

In reading Section 17, I am inclined to stand up for oral teaching, and to plead that it has its use. In many cases, I am sure that a child is unable to get much real good out of a book, unless he comes to it with some interest in its contents already in his mind, and some knowledge too, to which to attach what the book tells him. A previous oral lesson gives an opportunity for awaking such interest, and arousing the child's own questions on the subject, to which answers will afterwards be found in the book. Again, I do not doubt that Miss Mason is agreed with this, but her statement, as it stands, seems to me too sweeping, and likely rather to puzzle the teacher.

Section 14, on the use of books, seems to me in every way admirable, and I hope that it may come into the hands of very many teachers, as it shows how real books may be turned to most account. There is, however, I think, a need to point out a danger in the use of books, upon which Miss Mason has not touched, and of which, indeed, she hardly seems to me sufficiently conscious. I mean the danger of using books to supply information at second hand in a case where, if our object is real knowledge, it ought to come by actual observation and experience. This seems to me to be

exemplified in some specimens quoted in the Appendix:- as, for instance, in the account of bees, derived from "The Fairy Land of Science." Surely this would have been ten times as valuable if it represented what the child had actually noticed. And so with other examples given on page 30, which seem to me I must confess, to show the wrong use of books.

X In the same way, at the end of Section 17 I should like to protest against the statement that "the young shall learn what life is from the living books of those who know." We can only learn what life is by living it; and no course of books can supply the place, for a child, of a life with much freedom and much activity. And this is why I say that in this earlier stage acquaintance with things is even more necessary than acquaintance with books. Books can arouse, better, perhaps, than anything else, intellectual interests, and are necessary to give food for those finer feelings which are in part intellectual. But for the development of true mental power, as well as manual skill and practical interests, the training of contact with things is absolutely necessary; and in dwelling on the use and the need of books, one must not allow it to be supposed that too much is claimed for them.

These other needs are all allowed for in the summary given in the second Appendix; but even there I cannot help thinking that a little too much is expected in the way of book-work. Your experience must be very different from ours, if you find that more than one modern language can be

learnt with advantage, as well as Latin, at this stage.

I hope the above notes do not seem hypercritical, but it is just because I am so heartily in sympathy with almost all that Miss Mason urges, and because I feel that it needs to be brought strongly home to all parents and teachers, that I would wish it to be free from any appearance of one-sidedness, and from any possibility of misunderstanding.

To these notes the following answers by
Miss C.H. Pearson 16 p 8 cmc 301

I am very much gratified by Mr
Badley's helpful & always courteous
criticism.

I shall take up the points he makes in order:

Section I The distinction between Knowledge & information
(Section 1). is, I think, fundamental. Information
is the record of facts, experiences, ap-
pearances, &c. whether in books or in the
verbal memory of the individual:

Knowledge, it seems to me, implies the
result of the
voluntary & deliberate action of the mind
upon the material presented to it.
Great minds, a Darwin or a Plato are
able to deal at first hand with
appearances or experiences. The
ordinary mind gets at its
Knowledge by such direct dealing
but for the most part it is set in
action by the mediating Knowledge

of others which is at the same time a stimulus & a point of departure. The information acquired in the course of education is only by chance & here others of practical value. Knowledge on the other hand, that is the product of the vital action of the mind on the material presented to it, is power, as it implies an increase of intellectual aptitudes in new directions & an always new point of departure.

Perhaps the chief function of a teacher is to distinguish information from knowledge in the acquisitions of his pupils. Because knowledge is power, the child who has got knowledge will certainly show

power in dealing with it. He will
quest, condense, illustrate or
narrate with vividness & with
freedom in the arrangement
of his words. The child who has
got only information will write
or speak in the stereotyped
phrases of his textbook or will
mangle in his notes the words
of his teacher. (This is why I have said
that information is not education.)

X
II

(Section 4)

I am entirely in agreement with
Mr. Badley until we come to the
sentence "it is of course in the
sense of information" that educa-
tional theory systematically
depreciates knowledge rightly.
This is not quite my view.

I think educational theorists are inclined to attach more importance to the working of the intellectual machinery than to the output of the product; that is they feel it more important that a child should ^{be} think than that he should know. My contention is rather that he cannot know without having thought & also that he cannot think without an abundant varied regular supply of the material of knowledge. We all know how the reading of a passage stimulates in us thought, inquiry inference & so forth for as in the end some added knowledge.

III

"The principle that keeps one from

public schools alive is that they live upon books". Mr Badley explains this fully when he says that the books that the best public school boy has used "are amongst the finest books in the world". I do ~~not~~ think that this fact explains why the great public schools do not die but are "perennially alive". But I do not use "alive" to mean living, vital, energetic & I have spoken of their present failure to do anything for the average or the dull boy. This failure is ~~which~~ due to the fact that their training depends on "books alone".

X I am glad to be in agreement with Mr Badley in thinking that the

remedy lies partly in due preparation,
partly in a wide curriculum,
including both Things & Books.

14

Section 8
continued

I should however be inclined
to give equal value to Things &
Books. I have not made "Things"
prominent in our Manifesto for
2 reasons. In the 1st place that
side of education is occupying
public attention almost exclusively
just now. In the 2nd place the CPUE
has come before the public as
advocating Education by Things
rather than by Books though
perhaps as a matter of fact
both sides have had equal
attention. Which the danger is
giving too prominent a place

Education by things lies in a certain want of atmosphere in the deplorable absence of a standard of comparison of the principle of veneration. "We are the people" seems to be the note of an education which is not largely sustained by books as well as by things.

X
No V
Section 44
Cox.

I entirely agree that it would be better to carry out the liberal education I have in view at the age of 15, rather than 14. Also I should join in insisting on the need of two stages of School training, but whether the "requirements for the liberal training for the calling in life".

should be considered in the second
stage or in a third stage to begin
at a still later age, should I think
depend on the means & position
of the pupil

VI.
Section 17.

Assuredly oral teaching has its
uses; indeed I think those uses
were dwelt upon in the first
writing of the pamphlet under
discussion. We cannot do without
the oral lesson, to introduce, to
illustrate, to amplify, to sum up.
My stipulation is that oral lessons
should be like the visits of angels,
that the child who has to walk
through life should find his
intellectual food in books or
so without, shall not be first taught

VII
Section 16

top of crutches. And our experience is, as I have tried to show, that children take to books with surprising readiness. I am glad of the opportunity afforded to me to speak of the use of books in the very wide field which, for convenience, we call science.

I entirely agree that here knowledge should come "by actual observation & experience", as in the case of the children who wrote about spiders, thrushes, twigs. All the same, I think books have two uses in this field of knowledge.

Reference books are of value to children when they wish to verify or account for what they have

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X observed, while another class of
boats (those of Professor Lloyd Morgan,
Thompson, Judds etc) give inspiration
& a point of departure to the
student in search of knowledge.
The answer about bees is perhaps
acase in point. The child mixes
what she has seen with what she
has read; She could not have
obtained all her knowledge from
observation, but we may be sure
she will miss no opportunity
of watching the ways of bees
henceforth. I venture to believe
this because the whole is told
with the nerve & vividness
which indicates real knowledge.
I think these remarks apply to

the three answers on page 30
The child has evidently seen &
realised the dispersion of seeds,
though her attention may have been
first called to the matter by
Mrs Brightwell's book. In the
answers on a "piece of rhubarb"
& on the "eye" I should think a piece
of rhubarb & a microscope & an
eye from the butcher had been
used to judge by the vivid im-
pressions the writers would
have received. If the teaching
in these cases depended solely
on books, it was no doubt
defective & wrong in principle.
I am not sure that "we can only
learn what life is by living it"

X
Nov VIII.
Lesson 17.

Poets, novelists, the rest have given us
 vast help in interpreting "life" but
 I entirely agree that no course of
 books can supply the place for a
 child of "much freedom &
 much activity". I have written so
 much from time to time on the
 importance of these that I thought
 I might venture to speak on this
 occasion only of the use of Books
 in Education, but I am grateful
 for a reminder of the grave
 danger of allowing it "to be
 supposed that too much is claimed
 for them". What first occurred
 to me that the title of the pamphlet
 as it at present stands leaves
 me open to grave misapprehensions

The original title was Bacon's phrase
 "Studies serve for delight & studies"
 in the sense in which he uses the
 word as the subject of the
 pamphlet - written purely to
 bring to the front a side of
 education which runs some
 chance of being overlooked.
 Our teaching of languages is on
 the lines of all our teaching;
 we wish to set an open door
 before children, especially
 in the matters of the hearing
 pronouncing of foreign
 vocables. Let

Let me again say how much
 I value Mr Badley's sympathy
 manifested in his careful &
 thorough criticism -